

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 12, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 32, 36-38, 40, 42, 44, 54, 56, and 58.

Please add the following new claims 59-69.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1 - 11 (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A recombinant fusion polypeptide, comprising:

I³
(a) a multivalent immunogenic portion wherein the immunogenic portion comprises at least two immunogenic polypeptides from Group A streptococcal M protein, the polypeptides ~~comprising at least 10 amino acids and being an amino-terminal portion of a Group A streptococcal M protein and being~~ capable of eliciting an immune response against Group A Streptococci; and

(b) a carboxy-terminal polypeptide that protects the immunogenicity of the immunogenic portion, wherein the carboxy-terminal polypeptide is a reiteration of at least one immunogenic polypeptide from the amino-terminal ^{of said M protein} of the immunogenic portion and is at the carboxy-terminal of the fusion polypeptide.

13-14 (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Amended) The polypeptide according to claim 12 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a Group A Streptococci serotype selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, 30, 48, 49, 52 and 56.

16. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to claim 12 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of six immunogenic polypeptides, ~~wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of at least one Group A streptococcal M protein.~~ *fusion*

17. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of ~~claims 12 or 15-16~~ claims 12, 15, and 16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from ~~a serotype 11 Group A Streptococci~~ *group A streptococcal serotype 11.* *fusion*

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of ~~claims 12 or 15-16~~ claims 12, 15, and 16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from ~~a serotype 13 Group A Streptococci~~ *fusion*

T3 cont
20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of ~~claims 12 or 15-16~~ claims 12, 15, and 16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from ~~a serotype 22 Group A Streptococci~~ *fusion*

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of ~~claims 12 or 15-16~~ claims 12, 15, and 16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from ~~a serotype 28 Group A Streptococci~~ *fusion*

24-26. (Cancelled)

✓ 27. (Currently Amended) A composition for promoting an immune response against Group A Streptococci, comprising:

(a) a recombinant fusion polypeptide, comprising:

(i) a multivalent immunogenic portion wherein the immunogenic portion comprises at least two immunogenic polypeptides from Group A streptococcal M protein, the polypeptides ~~comprising at least 10 amino acids and being an amino-terminal~~ portion of a Group A streptococcal M protein and being capable of eliciting an immune response against Group A Streptococci; and

(ii) a carboxy-terminal polypeptide that protects the immunogenicity of the immunogenic portion, wherein the carboxy-terminal polypeptide is a reiteration of ^{of the} at least one immunogenic polypeptide from the amino-terminal of the immunogenic portion and is at the carboxy-terminal of the fusion polypeptide; and

(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.

I³ cont
28-29 (Cancelled)

30. (Previously Amended) The composition according to claim 27, further comprising an adjuvant.

31. (Previously Added) The composition according to claim 30 wherein the adjuvant is alum or Freund's adjuvant.

✓ 32. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ claims 27, 30, and 31, further comprising an immunomodulatory cofactor.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Added) The composition according to claim 32 wherein the immunomodulatory cofactor is selected from the group consisting of IL-4, IL-10, γ -IFN, IL-2, IL-12, and IL-15.

35. (Cancelled)

✓ 36. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ claims 27, 30, and 31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a Group A Streptococci serotype selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, 30, 48, 49, 52 and 56.

✓ 37. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ claims 27, 30, and 31 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of six immunogenic polypeptides, ~~wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of at least one Group A streptococcal M-protein.~~ ^{hard to lia}

✓ 38. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ claims 27, 30, and 31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 11 Group A Streptococci.

I3cont 39. (Cancelled)

✓ 40. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ claims 27, 30, and 31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 13 Group A Streptococci.

41. (Cancelled)

✓ 42. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ claims 27, 30, and 31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 22 Group A Streptococci.

43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of ~~claims 27 or 30-31~~ ^{claims 27, 30, and 31} wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 28 Group A Streptococci.)

45-53. (Cancelled)

54. (Currently Amended) ^{portion} The polypeptide according to ~~any one of claims 12 or 27~~ ^{claim 12} wherein only one immunogenic polypeptide is reiterated.

55. (Previously Added) ^{portion} The polypeptide according to claim 16 wherein ^{has amino-terminal} each M protein portion is from a different Group A Streptococcal serotype, the serotypes ^{being} 1, 3, 5, 6, 19, and 24.

56. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to ~~any one of claims 12 or 27~~ ^{claim 12} wherein the immunogenic portion consists of ^{ten} immunogenic polypeptides; ~~wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of a Group A streptococcal M protein.~~

^{I 3 cont} 57. (Previously Added) ^{portion} The polypeptide according to claim 56 wherein each M protein portion is from a different Group A Streptococcal serotype, the serotypes ^{being} 1, 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, and 30.

58. (Currently Amended) ^{portion} The polypeptide according to ~~any one of claims 12 or 27~~ ^{claim 12} wherein the immune response against Group A Streptococci comprises opsonic antibodies that do not cross-react with human tissue.

59. (New) The composition according to claim 27 wherein only one immunogenic polypeptide is reiterated.

60. (New) The composition according to claim 37 wherein each M protein portion is from a different Group A Streptococcal serotype, the serotypes being 1, 3, 5, 6, 19, and 24.

61. (New) The composition according to claim 27 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of ^{said 10} ten immunogenic polypeptides. ^{from the amino terminus}

62. (New) The composition according to claim 61 wherein each M protein portion is from a different Group A Streptococcal serotype, the serotypes being 1, 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, and 30. ^{the amino terminus}

63. (New) The composition according to claim 27 wherein the immune response against Group A Streptococci comprises opsonic antibodies that do not cross-react with human tissue.

^{I 3 cont} 64. (New) The ^{fusion} polypeptide according to claim 12 wherein the recombinant fusion polypeptide further consists of a marker amino acid sequence or an inconsequential non-immunogenic polypeptide.

65. (New) The ^{fusion} polypeptide according to claim 64 wherein the marker amino acid sequence or inconsequential non-immunogenic polypeptide is capable of binding a nickel resin.

66. (New) The ^{fusion} polypeptide according to claim 12 or claim 64 wherein the immunogenic polypeptides are joined by amino acids encoded by a restriction enzyme site.

67. (New) The composition according to claim 27 wherein the recombinant fusion polypeptide further consists of a marker amino acid sequence or an inconsequential non-immunogenic polypeptide.

68. (New) The composition according to claim 67 wherein the marker amino acid sequence or inconsequential non-immunogenic polypeptide is capable of binding a nickel resin.

69. (New) The composition according to claim 27 or claim 67 wherein the immunogenic polypeptides are joined by amino acids encoded by a restriction enzyme site.

I³ conc.

specified